



Questioning the Author (QtA)

Questioning the Author (QtA) is a text-based instructional practice that can develop into a student-owned reading strategy. **QtA** invites the reader to interact with the information and build meaning from the content by analyzing the **author's purpose** (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997).

- These questions, referred to as *queries* by Beck et al., are meant to serve as discussion prompts that invite students to develop ideas rather than restate information directly from the text.
- Queries require the students to take responsibility for thinking and for constructing understanding. As students wrestle with ideas and concepts while reading, their inquiry moves into deeper levels of meaning in narrative and expository texts by moving beyond the stated facts and becoming involved with issues. The students realize that the author is challenging them to build their ideas and concepts.
- As a result, collaborative discussion follows the open-ended and author-oriented queries.
- The goals of QtA are always the same: to construct meaning of text, to help the student go beyond the words on the page, and to relate outside experiences from other texts. The way to achieve these goals is discussion enriched by the student's world and their own personal histories.
- QtA involves the teacher as well as the whole class as they collaboratively build understanding during the reading. During this process the teacher participates in the discussion as a facilitator, guide, initiator, and responder. The role of the teacher is not to dominate the conversation, but to lead the students into dialogue with open-ended questions. The teacher strives to elicit the readers' thinking while keeping them focused in their discussion (McKeown & Beck, 1999).
- The students' answers are not evaluated in this procedure because QtA is designed to engage the readers with the text, not to rate the accuracy of their responses.

Goal	Query
Initiate discussion	What is the author trying to say? What is the author's message? What is the author talking about?
Focus on the author's message Linking information	That's what the author says, but what does it mean? How does that connect with what the author has already told us? What information has the author added here that connects or fits in with _____?
Identify difficulties with the way the author has presented information or ideas	Does that make sense? Is that said in a clear way? Did the author explain that clearly? Why or why not? What do we need to figure out or find out?
Encourage students to refer to the text because they have misinterpreted, or help them recognize that they have made an inference.	Did the author tell us that? Where? Did the author give us the answer to that? How?